NATURAL SHOCKS

by Lauren Gunderson

“Natural Shocks is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.”

The world premiere of NATURAL SHOCKS was presented in October 2018 by WP Theater

(Lisa McNulty, Producing Artistic Director; Michael Sag, Managing Director)
Natural Shocks
by Lauren Gunderson

January 29th and 30th

Directed by
Erin Ripley

Video Editor
KG

Production Stage Manager
Kelly Harper

Please be advised: Natural Shocks contains strong language and references to domestic abuse, gun violence, mass shootings, and mental health issues.

^Member of Alpha Psi Omega, National Theatre Honor Society
"Natural Shocks is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York."
As this production of Natural Shocks is a Kent State University Student production, we pay respect to the Erie, Mississauga, Osage, and Haudenosaunee people on whose ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands Kent State University’s eight regional campuses stand.

As you give thought to the themes and messages of this show, we also encourage you to take a moment to honor these grounds, ponder the impacts of colonization in your own spaces, listen to and amplify indigenous voices, and learn more about the nations and peoples on whose land you sit.
Erin Ripley

Erin grew up the youngest of three siblings near Toledo, Ohio. She is currently a Junior at Kent State University, pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre, a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Management, and a Minor in Arts Entrepreneurship. She is interested in working in theatrical, commercial, and film productions. As Erin is preparing to enter her final year at Kent State University, she has honed in on her career aspirations. She is committed to obtaining a well-rounded education from a Liberal Arts institution - and has tried to verse herself in many different aspects of the industry. This being said, Erin is so excited be making her directing debut at Kent State University with this production of "Natural Shocks". Following this, she is delighted to be assisting Dr. Daniel Nadon in directing Kent State’s main stage musical this spring, “35mm: A Musical Exhibition”.

"Natural Shocks" follows the story of Angela - our narrator. She is trapped in her basement, waiting out what appears to be an approaching storm. Throughout the production, we get a glimpse into Angela’s life as she reflects on her relationships and her place in the world. The play is based on Hamlet’s famous “To be or not to be” soliloquy, and in that - it is a condemning exploration of violence, abuse, and firearms in America. The play is originally written as a one-woman show, however we decided to divide the role up into five different women. Not only did this allow for more involvement in an academic environment, but we also chose to do this with the intention of conveying to the audience that this is not just the story of one woman. Rather the story of many women, everywhere, from all different walks of life. Thankfully, we had the help of Gunderson’s writing which eloquently divulges the human of the story.

We felt this story was an important one to share now, more than ever, because of the Domestic Violence pandemic that is happening within the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the New England Journal of Medicine, the number of calls to Domestic Violence Hotlines dropped by more than 50% in some regions during the height of quarantine. (Continued).
Although this statistic may not seem alarming at first, experts in the field knew that the number of calls had not decreased because the rates of Domestic Violence had decreased. In fact, many researchers’ predicted the opposite. “With personal movement limited and people confined to their homes, advocates expressed concern about a potential increase in intimate partner violence”. Stay-at-home orders, intended to protect the public and prevent widespread infection, left many victims of Intimate Partner Violence trapped with their abusers. They predict this caused a decrease in calls to their hotline because victims were unable to safely connect with services. “Though restrictions on movement have been lifted in most regions, the pandemic and its effects rage on, and there is widespread agreement that areas that have seen a drop in caseloads are likely to experience a second surge. This pandemic has reinforced important truths: inequities related to social determinants of health are magnified during a crisis, and sheltering in place does not inflict equivalent hardship on all people.”

This production was able to be filmed and rehearsed entirely remotely, utilizing Zoom as our primary platform. We feel so lucky to be able to continue to share our art throughout this pandemic, and also to be a part of a new era of theatre. There are endless gratitudes to be extended for all of the help we received putting this production together. Specifically, Erin would like to thank first the School of Theatre and Dance at Kent State for their support and encouragement. She would also like to thank her cast and crew for their endless patience and commitment to this piece. She would also like to acknowledge her mother, Karen, and all the other strong females in her life who have exemplified what it means to be a woman in this world. Additionally, she would like to thank all of her family and friends for their constant love and support, specifically Elijah King for all the pep-talks. This production would not have been possible without the influx of support and guidance we received through our communities. Creating this show has been something so special, and a memory we will treasure for years to come.
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Cast of Characters:

Ang ................................................................. Taylor Fox^ 
Angelina ............................................................ Kirstin Henry
Angie .............................................................. Megan Polk^ 
Angelica .......................................................... Sunayna Smith^ 
Gigi ............................................................... Elaine Werren^ 

*Note: The production is originally written as a one-woman show, with the character's name being Angela. The actor's each developed their own interpretation of the character and chose variations of the name Angela.

Scene Breakdown:

The production runs around 75 minutes with no intermission.

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Who’s WHO IN THE CAST

Taylor Rae Fox (Ang) is so excited to be a part of Natural Shocks! Originally from Cincinnati Ohio, she is a Senior Musical Theatre major here at Kent State University. Her previous credits include Zaneeta Shinn in The Music Man at Porthouse Theatre, Infanta Juana in The Hunchback of Seville as well as Mary Phagan in Parade both at Kent State University. She is so thankful to have the opportunity to tell this amazing story, and is very passionate about this show. Taylor would like to thank Erin for everything she has done for her and for this show, Kelly, Megan, Kirstin, Elaine and Sunny for making this process so memorable and enjoyable, and lastly her family and friends, for always believing in her. She hopes you are moved by this story as much as she is.

Kirstin Henry (Angelina) is a Junior Musical Theatre Major here at Kent. She is so blessed to have been a part of this production alongside all of the powerful and talented women involved. She always feels a connection with the works she does, but this one will always hold a very special place in her heart. Kirstin would like to thank many folks. To start with, the magnificent Erin Ripley. Her fearless director and friend, thank you for tackling not only a production filled with heavy and intense emotions but also managing that through the lens of Zoom. She would like to thank Kelly Harper for her incredible stage management skills. She would like to thank the wonderful KG for their editing magic. She would like to thank Elijah for helping Erin with all of the software. She would like to thank Rachael for her technology wisdom. She would like to thank her castmates for always making rehearsals a safe space. Lastly, she would like to thank her parents, siblings and Devin for all of their continued love and support.
Who’s Who in the Cast (Cont.)

**Sunayna Smith (Angelica)** is a senior musical theatre major with a minor in public relations from Pittsburgh, PA. Recent credits include: *In Pieces* (Ensemble), *Speech and Debate* (Diwata), *Heathers* (Martha), *Parade* (Angela), and *Shrek* (Dragon/Fairy Godmother). In her spare time, Sunny is planning her post pandemic trip to Disney World, or watching Criminal Minds. All the love to Mom, Dad, Jordan, and everyone involved with this production of Natural Shocks. Enjoy the show and don't forget to wear your mask! @sunaynasmith  
www.sunaynasmith.com “You can’t help it. An artist's duty, as far as I'm concerned, is to reflect the times”– Nina Simone

**Megan Polk (Angie)** is honored to have joined the talented team of Natural Shocks. She has recently been seen at The Cassidy Theatre in *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* (Woman 1), *MAMMA MIA!* (Sophie), *Annie* (Lily St. Regis), and *A Chorus Line* (Maggie). Other local credits include Mary Robert in *Sister Act* (Olde Towne Hall Theatre), Heather Chandler in *Heathers: the Musical* (Western Reserve Playhouse), and *Chicago* (The Brecksville Theatre). Professionally: *Hair* (Kent State University), It's a Bird, It's a Plane, It's...Superman! in concert (Musical Theatre Project). She will be entering her junior musical theatre major here at Kent State.

**Elaine Werren (Gigi)** is a senior BFA Musical Theatre major at Kent State University. Most recently she was seen in Kent State's production of *Hair* (Tribe/Black Boys Soloist). Some of her other past credits, from various theatre companies include, *Guys and Dolls* (Miss Adelaide), *Green Day's American Idiot* (Heather), ‘Night Mother (Mama) and Violet (Young Violet). Outside of theatre, she finds herself really drawn to the world of politics and loves to spend time with her friends and two cats. She would like to thank Erin and the fellow ladies of Natural Shocks for inspiring her and allowing her a space to create art during these uncertain times.
SPECIAL THANKS TO:

• Alpha Psi Omega
• Dr. Daniel Raymond Nadon
• Kelly Harper
• KG
• Nathan Hoty
• Rachael Armbruster
• The Cast
• The many others who have offered their support and guidance throughout this process!
End Violence. Refuse To Be Silent.

National Domestic Violence Hotline:
1.800.799.SAFE (7233)
https://www.thehotline.org/ - Live Chat

Townhall 2 is a local crisis center in Kent, OH that focuses on promoting the health, wellness, and recovery of individuals and communities through prevention, education, advocacy, intervention, and treatment.

For non-emergencies contact them through their business line: 330.678.3006
Townhall 2 Crisis Helpline: 330.678.HELP (4357)
Townhall 2 Crisis Text Line: 4hope to 741741
The ones who have no voice need YOU to speak up.

We are so grateful to have had the opportunity to create art and theatre during these unprecedented times. We are also fortunate that we were able to share it with you at no cost. Unfortunately, "As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, Americans are required to stay home to protect themselves and their communities. However, the home may not be safe for many families who experience domestic violence, which may include both intimate partners and children. COVID-19 has caused major economic devastation, disconnected many from community resources and support systems, and created widespread uncertainty and panic. Such conditions may stimulate violence in families where it didn’t exist before and worsen situations in homes where mistreatment and violence has been a problem. Violence in the home has an overall cost to society, leading to potentially adverse physical and mental health outcomes, including a higher risk of chronic disease, substance use, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder" and more - as stated on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. We ask that in lieu of your ticket fee today, you consider donating to one of these organizations. These organizations have been created to provide many services to victims of domestic abuse, including: 24 hour hotlines, emergency protective shelters, providing outreach and aftercare, legal advocacy, transitional housing programs, medical advocacy, and more.

- National Coalition Against Domestic Violence: https://ncadv.org/donate
- Domestic Violence Project Inc.: https://www.dvpi.org/home
- A list of National Domestic Violence Organizations, curated by the National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma and Mental Health: http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/resources/national-domestic-violence-organizations/